

Last week we looked at the King of Glory taking His rightful place on the throne of David and standing as our great High Priest in the Holy of Holies (Psalm 24:3). Today we'll return to that theme by looking at Psalm two, which along with its mate, psalm 110, are perhaps of all the psalms most clearly Messianic.

In Psalm one, we can see the contrast of the blessed man of God who meditates on the Word of God and the ungodly (Psalm 1:1-2). The blessed man does not stand in the counsel of the ungodly. By contrast, the ungodly will not stand in the judgment. The counsels of this world will always be at odds with that of God's word (1Corinthians 2:12-14). Psalm two begins with what I believe is the grand conclusion of this conflict, preparation for the battle of Armageddon. *¹ Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying,* Psalm 2:1-2 (ESV)

It's a good question. Why on earth would anyone think they could succeed in plotting against their Creator? Did Herod really think he could stop the prophecies of the coming of Messiah in Bethlehem by killing the babies born there (Matthew 2:13)? I suppose that when the final showdown comes the rulers could convince themselves that Jesus is an alien power that has come to take over their world. It just seems like madness to imagine people thinking they can resist God, yet it happens all the time! **At first I was thinking it would be insanity, but after thinking about it more, I think it is better described as depravity.**

I attended a state run course on addiction to support a brother who was court ordered to take the class. The course just confirmed what I already believed, that addictions are completely unreasonable enslavement of our minds. I pointed out to the instructor that their solutions were all Biblically based and that the real solution was a renewed mind (Romans 12:2). I don't think he liked my input. Why do heathen rage and imagine they can defeat their Creator? The answer is not so simple, but you can sum it up in saying they are addicted to sin. This is where sin leads, enslavement, rebellion against God, and finally imagining that you can escape the consequences.

The ultimate expression of this rebellion is the vain plotting against Jesus at Armageddon. Could man really think that if they nuked Jesus they could go on and live lives of indulgence? Any kind of plotting against God, whether it is physical or spiritual warfare, would be in vain. The Lord knows our thoughts (Psalm 139:2)! He is all-powerful. He lives outside of time and is present at once throughout time. The demons tremble in His presence because they know His authority. All of history will come down to this great conflict of the kings and rulers of the world setting themselves against Him.

Commented [notes1]: Psalm 24:3 (ESV)

³ Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place?

Commented [notes2]: Psalm 1:1-2 (ESV)

¹ Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

Commented [notes3]: 1 Corinthians 2:12-14 (ESV)

¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. ¹³ And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. ¹⁴ The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

Commented [notes4]: Matthew 2:13 (ESV)

¹³ Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him."

Commented [notes5]: Romans 12:2 (ESV)

² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Commented [notes6]: Psalm 139:2 (ESV)

² You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.

We have the expression, "set in your ways", meaning an inflexible habit. These rulers are set in their hearts against Jesus. They have hardened their heart like Pharaoh before them in spite of all they have seen (Exodus 7:13). Imagine seeing the walls of water and a path into the sea and being so filled with hate that you order your forces in to their own demise. Another psalm tells us the vanity of the world's resistance. ⁶ *The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts.* Psalm 46:6 (ESV)

They take counsel together against the LORD and against His anointed. Originally that meant against the king of Israel, but our English word "anointed" is the Hebrew word "Messiah" or the Greek word "Christ". Both the early Jewish Sages and Christians clearly saw this as a Messianic Psalm.

The early church saw an intermediate fulfillment of the leaders taking counsel against God's anointed in the crucifixion of Jesus and persecution of the church (Acts 4:24-28). The rulers took counsel against Jesus to have Him put to death. That was just as much in vain as the final rebellion and plotting against Him will be. Remember that after Jesus raised Lazarus, the religious rulers plotted to put Him to death (John 11:53). Now, think about it. How crazy is it to think you can kill the One that has power over death? **Rebellion against God is unreasonable, whether it is international or personal!** Putting Him to death only sent Him to victory over death and the salvation of all who trust in Him. The world's best efforts to destroy the trouble maker, Jesus, exalted Him to the highest place! That is how vain their efforts are (Job 9:4)!

Even at the end of the millennial reign of Jesus on the throne of David, the nations will allow themselves to be deceived once again into thinking they can defeat God (Revelation 20:7-8). Never underestimate the hardness of the heart of man and its capacity for evil (Jeremiah 17:9). What the rulers said gives us insight into the heart issues. ³ *"Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.* Psalm 2:3 (ESV) What they are saying is, "Who needs these antiquated ideas that keep us from expressing our inner desires? What gives anyone the right to say something is right or wrong? We will not be constrained by their religious intolerance! We'll repeal all laws based on the morality of their religion and be free to do what we think is right."

A read through the book of Judges will give you an idea of where this is headed in the short term. Everyone did what was right in their own eyes and it resulted in debauchery, a break down in the judicial system, and civil war (Judges 21:25). At Armageddon it will be an attempt to keep the King of kings from reigning on the earth. At the end of the millennial reign it will be the last effort to be free of the Lordship of Jesus.

And how does this great collusion of the best minds of man and their military might affect the Lord? ⁴ *He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.*

Commented [notes7]: Exodus 7:13 (ESV)

¹³ Still Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

Commented [notes8]: Acts 4:24-28 (ESV)

²⁴ And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, ²⁵ who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, -"Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶ The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed" ²⁷ for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

Commented [notes9]: John 11:53 (ESV)

⁵³ So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

Commented [notes10]: Job 9:4 (ESV)

⁴ He is wise in heart and mighty in strength—who has hardened himself against him, and succeeded?

Commented [notes11]: Revelation 20:7-8 (ESV)

⁷ And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison

⁸ and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea.

Commented [notes12]: Jeremiah 17:9 (ESV)

⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Commented [notes13]: Judges 21:25 (ESV)

²⁵ In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Psalm 2:4 (ESV) The Almighty is not shaking in fear. He is not the least concerned. In fact, Satan's best efforts to thwart Him only cause Him to laugh at the futility of their plan (Psalm 37:12-13).

⁵ Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, ⁶ "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." Psalm 2:5-6 (ESV) When God speaks, the earth melts. If He speaks and things are created, He can certainly speak and end their existence. And what terrifies them most of all is the King of kings will reign at the decree of God Almighty on Zion; that is David's throne. The prophecies will come to pass because the One that decreed them through the mouth of His prophets sees the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). The darkness will never drown out the light, but the light *will* dispel the darkness. They are terrified because they will begin to realize the just sentence their rebellion deserves and that they are helpless against the Almighty. The King of kings will reign and that means evil will be judged.

When God decrees something, it is final. *⁷ I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you."* Psalm 2:7 (ESV) The Son tells the world that the Father has decreed Him to be the Son and therefore Prince over all creation (Revelation 1:5). Yet, because they are one, He is also King over all. Some see this uttered at the time of His earthly birth, but it is probably referring to the resurrection. Paul declared in Romans 1:4 (KJV), *⁴ And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:*

Twice in this psalm it calls this One that reigns, the Son. God quotes "You are my Son", both at the baptism of Jesus and on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 3:17; 17:5). It is cited numerous times in Apostolic preaching (Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5, 5:5; 1John 5:9). It was an essential part of the faith of the early church.

Kabbalists (mystic Judaism) do not have a problem with the Trinity ⁴, but mainstream Judaism has difficulty with this psalm. Most recognize it as Messianic, but then struggle with the term Son, identifying it with Israel. The Midrash has numerous cross references to Psalm 2 regarding decrees of the LORD, all of which are Messianic passages. ¹

Risto Santala tells of a story during the time he lived in Israel. His son was dying in the hospital and a dear Jewish friend who was a linguist came to urge him and his son to convert to Judaism. Risto told him that he had no need to convert, that he and his son had accepted the One who had fulfilled the Law, the Son of God. He writes, "But", my friend protested, taking a Bible out of his briefcase, "God doesn't have a son. Show me where it says so."

Commented [notes14]: Psalm 37:12-13 (ESV)

¹² The wicked plots against the righteous and gnashes his teeth at him,
¹³ but the Lord laughs at the wicked, for he sees that his day is coming.

Commented [notes15]: Isaiah 46:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.'

Commented [notes16]: Revelation 1:5 (KJV)

⁵ And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

Commented [notes17]: Matthew 3:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

Commented [notes18]: Matthew 17:5 (ESV)

⁵ He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."

Commented [notes19]: Acts 13:33 (ESV)

³³ this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you."

Commented [notes20]: Hebrews 1:5 (ESV)

⁵ For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you" Or again, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"

Commented [notes21]: Hebrews 5:5 (ESV)

⁵ So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you":

Commented [notes22]: 1 John 5:9 (ESV)

⁹ If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son.

Commented [notes23]: "You are the good shepherd; of you it is said, 'Kiss the Son'. You are great here below, the teacher of Israel, the Lord of the serving angels, the son of the Most High, the son of the Holy One, may his name be praised and his Holy Spirit." Zohar Pt 3. P. 307 Amsterdam Edition

Commented [notes24]: The Midrash sets them out as following:

"The decree is that of the prophets, because Is. 52:13 says 'My servant will prosper' and Is. 42:1 adds 'Here is my servant whom I uphold'; It is the decree of the Psalms, as Ps. 110:1 says 'The LORD said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand', and Ps.2:7 says 'He said to me; You are my son'; and also elsewhere it is written (Dan.7:13), 'In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds'. The LORD said 'You are my son'. The decrees are those of the king, the king of kings, that this would be done to the Messiah-King... "

I made a silent prayer, because a glib answer will not satisfy someone who is in earnest. Somewhere from my subconscious a verse arose of which I had no recollection of knowing. "Read Proverbs 30 verse 4", I said, and he read: "Who has gone up to heaven and come down?... What is his name, and the name of his son? Tell me if you know!"

"This will have to be explained", my friend said, "It can't just be taken as it stands." I asked him to read on: "Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar." Somehow it seemed that the words went home.²

In Psalm two the LORD went on to tell the Son, ⁸ *Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.* Psalm 2:8 (ESV) Jesus earned the right to reign for He was obedient to death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:8). The One you want on the throne of eternity is One who has consistently yielded to the loving and righteous heart of God the Father. As we said last week, in the hands of any other such power would turn into a nightmare. Jesus will reign on the earth. He is the stone of Daniel chapter two that becomes a great mountain that fills the whole earth (Daniel 2:44-45). We'll see how we should have handled one another and the earth in that day. And yet the rulers will take counsel together against the LORD and against His Messiah.

There will be nothing more that can be done to turn their hearts. They are set in their ways. They cannot be dissuaded, and God will not violate their will. That is why all that is left to do is the following verse. ⁹ *You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.* Psalm 2:9 (ESV) We read of the fulfillment of this passage in Revelation when the One with the name Faithful and True comes forth riding on a white horse with the armies of heaven following behind. Out of His mouth proceeds a sharp sword with which He slays the enemies of goodness and righteousness (Revelation 19:11-19).

He has always dealt out justice even in this life to those who would resist Him and His anointed servants. The words of the next verse are plea for sanity, a plea to realize the futility of resisting truth. ¹⁰ *Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth.* ¹¹ *Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.* Psalm 2:10-11 (ESV)

Spurgeon gave a summary of those Roman emperors and officials who resisted the cause of Christ. He writes, "Here is the end of one of the greatest plots ever formed against God's chosen. Of thirty Roman emperors, governors of provinces, and others high in office, who distinguished themselves by their zeal and bitterness in persecuting the early Christians, one became speedily deranged after some atrocious cruelty, one was slain by his own son, one became blind, the eyes of one started out of his head, one was drowned, one was strangled, one died in a miserable captivity, one fell dead in a manner

Commented [notes25]: <http://www.ristosantala.com/rsia/OT/OT14.html#ind>

Commented [notes26]: **Philippians 2:8 (ESV)**

⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Commented [notes27]: **Daniel 2:44-45 (ESV)**

⁴⁴ And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, ⁴⁵ just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure."

Commented [notes28]: **Revelation 19:11-19 (ESV)**

¹¹ Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. ¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. ¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. ¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, ¹⁸ to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." ¹⁹ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.

that will not bear recital, one died of so loathsome a disease that several of his physicians were put to death because they could not abide the stench that filled his room, two committed suicide, a third attempted it, but had to call for help to finish the work, five were assassinated by their own people or servants, five others died the most miserable and excruciating deaths, several of them having an untold complication of diseases, and eight were killed in battle, or after being taken prisoners. Among these was Julian the apostate. In the days of his prosperity he is said to have pointed his dagger to heaven defying the Son of God, whom he commonly called the Galilean. But when he was wounded in battle, he saw that all was over with him, and he gathered up his clotted blood, and threw it into the air, exclaiming, "Thou hast conquered, O thou Galilean."³

Commented [notes29]: C.H. Spurgeon, The Treasury of David Psalm 2

The way of wisdom is to serve the LORD with fear and to rejoice with trembling as opposed to those who would resist Him to their own demise. **To serve without fear is to take His grace for granted which sets us in slippery places. To serve with fear but without rejoicing is drudgery. Wisdom combines the rejoicing and reverential fear.**

If those who are rebelling against the goodness of the Son of God would only look at history and heed the warning of this psalm, the world would be headed in a different direction. Few will heed the warning, but those who do will be blessed. They will act on the final verse and experience its blessing. *¹² Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.* Psalm 2:12 (ESV) To kiss the hand of a king is to show respect and submission. Jews have an additional meaning. The Talmud decrees that upon meeting a teacher one should kiss his hand. Jesus is our King and Savior, but He is also our teacher. He uncovers the lies that the world teaches. He reveals the delusions of Satan. His Word guides us in the paths of righteousness and leads us to blessing and eternal life in Him (Psalm 23:3).

Commented [notes30]: Psalm 23:3 (ESV)
³ He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Are you wise? Do you have a healthy fear of the Lord's justice? Have you kissed the Son? Have you found the blessing of taking refuge in Him? 3000 years ago, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit directed David's heart to lay out the history of the world in this psalm. Be wise, and receive the very Son of God. The Spirit is inviting us fallen creatures to receive Him. Let Him be your teacher. When you take His hand to kiss it, you'll find a love scar, the proof of His love for you.

Questions

- 1 What question does the psalm present?
- 2 How was it fulfilled in the past?
- 3 Why is it vain to fight God?
- 4 Why does the world resist Him?
- 5 What is God's response to their plots?

- 6 Who is the Son?
- 7 How do we know this is a messianic psalm?
- 8 Review the history of anti-Christian emperors?
- 9 What is God's plea to the rulers?
- 10 What is implied by kissing the hand?
- 11 Who receives the blessing?